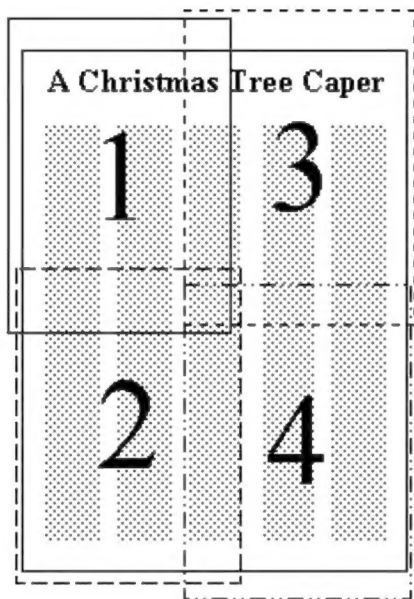


NOTE: This newspaper appearance was divided and enlarged to fill 8 ½" x 11" pages, roughly in the manner shown below.



READ an interesting article the other day," I said. "It was called 'To Blaze With Togetherness.'"

My wife Nora nodded. "I've seen the author on television."

I offered George Whitley one of my cigars. "He says that women control our wealth and do most of our buying. And now they want to be with us all the time. They want to stifle and tame us."

George sighed. "It's a dreadful thing to contemplate. Man is the thinker. He must be free. He has the creative mind, a devotion to intellect, a crusading courage and a few other positive things like that."

George's wife, Ellen, smiled at him fondly. "George sits for hours in his easy chair, just breathing softly now and then and thinking like mad."

I felt a twinge of curiosity. "Ever come up with anything, George?"

George shook his head. "Not yet. But one of these days I'll startle the world."

"Man wants struggle and competition," I said. "Women's goal is peace, security, protection and comfort."

George watched a lazy puff from his cigar. "From now on I'm against those things. I realize now that I've been nothing but a big old contented slave."

NODDED. "The first thing we've got to do is hire ourselves a boat and go fishing."

George didn't get that. "What's fishing got to do with our struggle for independence, Fred?"

I smiled with my new wisdom. "You haven't been reading the right articles. George

ANTITOGGET

By JACK RITCHIE

(Cop

A SHORT SHORT

"What's my wife got to laugh about?" I demanded angrily. "She's married to me."



but oh, you squid." I turned to Nora. "A squid is a sort of tin plug-like contraption that ..."

NORA looked at the ceiling. "I know."

I slapped the palm of my hand. "We've got to see a couple of bull fights, too, George. A real man's answer to ballet."

George nodded significantly. "The Hour of Truth."

Ellen Whitley shook her head sadly. "Now they've got their authors all mixed up. I

They're afraid we'll be attracted by other women."

George looked around. "Out here?"

George cast four or five times and then suddenly his rod bent. "I've got one," he shouted. "This is the battle, the primeval struggle for which man exists."

At the end of 30 seconds, I netted the fish for him.

George gazed at it admiringly. "That takes care of another wily monster of the deep."

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George didn't get that. "What's fishing got to do with our struggle for independence, Fred?"

I smiled with my new wisdom. "You haven't been reading the right articles, George. Deep-sea fishing is a man's world. You pull on one end of a line the fish pulls on the other. This goes on for glorious hours and it tones up your favorite hormones."

I hooked a thumb in my belt and looked at my wife. "It's a real man's world. There are a few left, you know."

George's face brightened. "When the fishing's bad we'll grab our machine guns and shoot sharks. And when we get tired of that, we'll sip gin and brag about how male we are. That ought to convince anybody who has grave doubts."

I chuckled. "I love my wife,



"I'll get in touch with you."

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Ellen Whitley shook her head sadly. "Now they've got their authors all mixed up. I do hope they don't decide to raise beards."

Nora smiled patiently. "I hate to sound practical, but why don't you two males try bass fishing? The ocean is miles and miles away from here."

"Right, Miss Nora," I said. "There's nothing so exhilarating as the power-packed surge of a courageous, battling smallmouth." I thought that over. "Unless maybe its shooting hyenas in Africa."

Ellen clasped her hands. "I adore outings. What shall I wear?"

George broke the half minute of silence. "We'll take them along up the river, but they don't set foot in the boat."

ON Sunday afternoon we motored to the Wolf River, where George and I rented a 12-foot boat and a motor.

"Have a good time," my wife said. "Ellen and I will get into our bathing suits and get ourselves a tan."

George and I cruised along the bank for several hundred yards, then anchored.

I attached a spinner to the end of my line. "Women are so possessive. They can't leave us out of their sight."

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FROM the shore came the faint sound of a woman's laughter.

George flushed. "I know it's a small fish, but I don't think Ellen should laugh."

I squinted toward the river bank. "It's not that, George. They aren't even looking our way."

George shaded his eyes. "Two big tan men are talking to them."

"Beach bums," I said scornfully. "I've got a good mind to go ashore and pelt them to death with marshmallows."

This time the sound of the laughter was more familiar.

"What's my wife got to laugh about?" I demanded angrily. "She's married to me."

George bit into his cigar. "That article was right. Women believe in togetherness. If they're not together with us, they're together with somebody else."

I glared at George and made a cast. On the retrieve my lure snagged in the weeds. I pulled savagely and the plug came snapping back toward our boat.

George yelled and stood up.

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ANTITOGETHERNESS

JACK RITCHIE

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"Sit down," I said calmly.
"This is no time to panic.
You're rocking the boat."

George sat down. "This is
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George whitened. "Nobody touches this but a qualified surgeon."

I laughed cheerfully. "That's not the right attitude for a professional male, George. A slight sting, and the angler goes back to fishing."

GEORGE'S eyes were fixed on the shore. "Get me back to my wife. I'm probably suffering from shock. I ought to have a warm blanket draped tenderly over my shoulders."

I tried for 15 minutes to start the motor.

George smiled wanly. "I guess you'll have to row. I'll just trail my hand in the water to see if we're making any headway."

We got back to shore in about half an hour and our wives met us at the dock.

"Dear," my wife said. "Why did you keep rowing in circles?"

"If you were really paying attention," I said irritably, "You would have noticed that the circles kept getting closer to the dock. It was only a matter of time."

"The pain was terrible," George said. "But I bit the bullet."

I scowled at the two very

big and tan young men who were now talking to a group of girls farther down the bank.

"It was so flattering," my wife said. "They tried to date us."

"We were thinking it over," Ellen Whitley said. "And then you two had to come back."

George moaned. "I could bleed to death and nobody would notice."

BECAUSE I couldn't handle the steering wheel with my blistering hands, Nora had to drive us to the doctor. He removed the hook with a pair of pliers.

George and I sat in the back seat for the drive home. The sun was just beginning to set and summer drowsiness filled the air.

George exhaled cigar smoke and sighed. "I can't help it, Fred. Right now I'm feeling peaceful, secure, protected, and comfortable."

I yawned slightly. "Fight it, George."

George smiled dreamily. "What we need now is to get home and have a good meal."

Ellen glanced back. "May we possessive wives sit at the same table with you? Or would you still rather be rugged and alone?"

I rubbed my ear. "I think we ought to let them, George."

George nodded slowly. "That way we can keep an eye on them."

In the evening Nora and Ellen sat on the living-room davenport and didn't need our help to keep a conversation going.

George and I played three slashing, courageous games of chess.

The room was pleasant and calm and insidious. Togetherness was in the air.